

location

Metro and Non-Metro Occupational Projections

Any real estate agent worth their salt will tell you that location is one of the most important factors in the selling price of a home. “Location, location, location” also plays a vital role in determining whether or not a particular occupation will be in demand—now and in the future.

Currently, the Utah Department of Workforce Services produces three sets of occupational projections based on location—statewide, metro, and non-metro. In addition, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics generates national occupational projections for those of you willing (or anxious) to leave the Beehive State. Metro-level projections include employment in the densely populated counties along the Wasatch

Front—Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, and Weber. Non-metro projections include jobs in the remaining 25 counties.

Pay Attention to the Details

Thanks to expanded data collection, in our next projection round we will be able to provide greater geographic detail. Planners and job seekers will then be able to better assess occupational opportunities in the future.

But for now, let's take a look at the differences between the most urbanized area of Utah and the rest of the state. In general, a metropolitan population center will provide a much wider set of occupational possibilities. Just think of the myri-

ad of job opportunities that exist in Salt Lake County compared to the limited variety of occupations in a small town like Loa, Utah. In addition, many less-populated counties rely heavily on natural resource-based industries or tourism. These differences in industries, and many more, affect which occupations will be in demand in the years ahead.

Education Pays

While demand for occupations requiring at least a four-year degree will increase through the next decade for both geographic areas, the demand will be more intensive along the Wasatch Front. Roughly one-fourth of new jobs in the metro area will require a bachelor's degree or higher compared to only

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about one-fifth of non-metro positions. Nevertheless, the best-paying occupations in both areas typically require a higher level of education. Even the highest-paying jobs that require only on-the-job training typically require a high level of work experience.

Get in a Group

Different patterns emerge among major occupational groupings for each geographic area. Non-

metro groups projected to show the most rapid growth include (in order) healthcare support, healthcare practitioners/technical occupations, computer/mathematical jobs, and community/social services positions. On the other hand, metro projections show the fastest growth in computer/mathematical occupations followed by healthcare support, healthcare practitioners/technical occupations, and architecture/engineering positions. However, one thing becomes clear from both sets of data. The most rapidly growing groups of occupations are those in the healthcare field and those requiring computer or engineering skills.

A word of caution: These projections only provide information based on the “demand” side of

the labor market equation. In other words, the openings that employers are expected to “demand” or require by occupation. However, some occupations may have a large number of openings, but an even larger number of willing workers. Unfortunately, labor supply information is notoriously difficult to obtain and project. But, you may want to check out the training completer information at this website: <http://www.occsupplydemand.org>

Look to the Stars

Recently, we’ve integrated a new way of ranking occupations. Retail salespersons and cashiers always top the list—regardless of area—in terms of job openings. Of course, while plentiful, these positions typically pay lower-than-average wages and are

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Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services

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generally stepping stones to better careers. To help our users understand the projections in a meaningful way, we currently apply star ratings to occupations with at least 100 workers in the base year. It's similar to a movie critic's ratings—the more stars, the better the outlook and wages. The occupations with the best employment demand outlook and high wages are given a five-star ranking. Occupations with poor employment outlook and low wages are given the lowest (one-star) rating.

The accompanying charts display the best of the five-star jobs for both metro and non-metro areas.

Keep in mind that a five-star occupation requiring a

degree will pay a much higher wage than a five-star on-the-job-training position. However, different individuals have different school/training tolerances. This method provides information so all individuals can make good career choices based on the level of training they desire.

There's More...

Of course, in this brief article, we can't cover the hundreds of occupations available here in Utah. If you want to learn more about in-demand jobs, their wages and training requirements, a wealth of information is available on our website. ⓘ

For more information on Utah careers, go to: <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/occi.html>



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services